Editorial

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> To Speak Truth, the World is but a great *Bedlam*, where those that are *more mad*, lock up those that are *less*; the *first* presumptuously, and knowingly, committing Evils both against God their Neighbours and themselves; but the *last*, not knowing what they do, are as it were next door to *innocency*...
> Thomas Tyron, *A Discourse of the Causes, Natures and Cure of Phrensie, Madness or Distraction* (1689)

> Much Madness is divinest Sense –
> To a discerning Eye –
> Much Sense – the starkest Madness –
> 'Tis the Majority
> In this, as All, prevail –
> Assent – and you are sane –
> Demur – you're straightway dangerous –
> And handled with a Chain –
> Emily Dickinson, 'Much Madness is divinest Sense' (c. 1862)

> Show me a sane man and I will cure him.
> C. G. Jung

> In short, the social role of mental illness can be *created* by collective judgements imposed upon those who are socially vulnerable, and voluntarily adopted by persons as a defensive strategy. The end result is not a patient with a disease, but a victim of a socially constructed reality.
> Robert Perruci, *Circle of Madness* (New Jersey: Spectrum, 1974), p. 17.

> The Other is what allows me not to repeat myself for ever.
> Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil. Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1993), p. 174.

> Madness has historically 'proved to be the grand transgressor'.
> Chris Jenks, *Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 135.

The diverse research interests of the three editors of this 'madness' edition of *Transgressive Culture* means the content here is especially transdisciplinary. Given 'madness' and transgression are concerned with challenging the limit, along with Russell Williams' eclectic selection of reviews, this is apposite. Charley Baker is Lecturer in Mental Health in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy at the University

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of Nottingham. She co-founded both the Madness and Literature Network (www.madnessandliterature.org) and the International Health Humanities Network (www.healthhumanities.org). Jason Lee is Professor of Culture and Creative Writing and Head of Film and Media with Creative Writing at the University of Derby and has published extensively on child sexual abuse and madness, as well as a novel about a mental health ward, *Dr Cipriano's Cell*, and another novel that examines insanity, *Unholy Days*. Sarah Rossellini is a postgraduate on the MA Humanities – Horror and Transgression at the University of Derby, and co-founder of beyondtransgression.wordpress.com, specializing in transgression, science fiction, technology and culture.

We share an interest in the ways in which 'madness' has, both historically and in contemporary culture, been mobilized as being an act of transgression, how it can be seen as transgressive by its very nature, and in how 'madness' may not in fact be actively transgressive at all. In his 1999 book *Madness and the Savage*, Lee considered representations and perceptions of 'madness' in relation to indigenous cultures. Clearly, our relationship with 'madness' is often our relationship with the monstrous that defines us, that is, our own perceptions. In this sense, 'madness' can be a re-framing and positive lens that breaks the status quo and challenges power. As Foucault put it, 'madness' provides no answers, but it forces the world to question itself – and the work of 'mad' people, such as Nietzsche and Van Gogh, has become the measure of the height of creativity which can be seen as the triumph of madness.

Despite extensive medical classifications of mental disorders, this field remains contentious and oblique. 'Madness' confronts the foundations of knowledge, and all that is known, by its very process of unknowing. 'Madness' in its essence is beyond definition, this being the quintessence of a definition. R. D. Laing, Thomas Szasz, Erich Fromm, and many others, have attempted to demystify 'madness', seeing 'madness' as caused in part by our irrational repressive society, which itself is 'mad'. This might be simplistic, but with 'progress' in some respects currently being questioned globally, as no longer a viable or sane endeavour, questions over 'madness' and culture raise their heads once more – hence the necessity of this edition.

Images of 'madness' in the media hold a powerful influence over the creation and transmission of what are often conflicting cultural stereotypes of mental illness, none more so than in the cinema. In his 1996 article 'Images of Madness in the Films of Walt Disney', Allan Beveridge discussed Disney's 1951 adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, where partygoers at the Mad Hatters Tea Party are portrayed as violent, capricious and nonsensical, labelling 'madness' as imaginary at best – the evaporating Cheshire Cat who 'is not quite all there' – and an

absurdity at its worst – Alice's chiding them for their 'silly nonsense'. There is also the notion of 'madness' being naughty here. In the more abstract symbolism and metaphorical treatment in say Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), with the rooms of The Overlook Hotel creating a claustrophobic, cerebral space, the viewer is asked to consider if protagonist Jack Torrence's (Jack Nicholson) insanity is a result of his self-inflicted alcoholism, a backlash for his previous transgressions, or a supernatural force out of his control.

In considering these stories as a visual rather than written medium, Beveridge also suggests that it is not necessarily the verbal dexterity of the 'mad' characters that impresses but their anarchic and violent behaviour which makes most impact on the viewer. Of course, so-called benign 'madness' may have less visual impact, and is less memorable, and it is interesting to consider in general what we re-member from films. What is established are the *uncanny* feelings that are evoked of the familiar/unfamiliar place, with Alice's wonderland and Torrence's haunted hotel and the transgressive idea of losing one's way: Torrence finally meets his end caught in the maze that sits in the grounds of the Overloook Hotel, just as Alice's battles with the Queen of Hearts in her wonderland labyrinth suggest that 'madness' is something that should have remained secret and hidden but has now come to light, challenging the known and unknowable. For Alice, it all turns out to be a harmless dream from which she eventually wakes of her own volition, but unfortunately for Torrence, possessed and deranged, driven to attempt the vile transgression of infanticide, his story ends in a deadly nightmare. Nicholson returns to a similar role in *The Pledge* (Sean Penn, 2001), where insanity overcomes him. Gabard and Gabard are philosophical in *Psychiatry and the Cinema (1999)* when considering that it is perhaps too much to expect movies to provide a balanced insight into the multi-faceted and constantly evolving questions surrounding cultural attitudes to 'madness', insanity and mental illness. David Cronenburg has a good stab at it in his 2002 film *Spider*, where we are never sure who is really 'insane'. The majority of big budget filmmakers and their audiences are, of course, more interested in arousing an emotional response, in providing an escapist entertainment, but it is difficult to ignore the profound and mysterious impression that cinema has on its viewers. Indeed, as Christian Metz indicated in early film theory, the cinematic process itself induces a form of 'madness' in the viewer for the unbelievable to be believable.

How should and can madness in the 21st century be conceptualized and who should be in charge of such conceptualization? Zeynep Dagli questions our need to impose such a system of conceptualization at all when we are confronted by an individual's subjective experiences of utter annihilation. Despite the ongoing relevance of Freud, there is a nine-

teenth trap here, where knowledge appears stuck in mere categorization and absurd power games. Importantly, how service users may be transgressing notions of the Good Patient, or may be subverting the very systems that aim to maintain a level of socially accepted, acceptable and ascribed stability, is an area explored here by Brian Brown, Sally Baker and Charley Baker in their exploration of service user involvement in the UK. Also in a clinically focused vein, from an international perspective, Courtney Anne Cuthbertson presents fieldwork into the experience of depression in post-dictatorial Chile. Alastair Morgan provides a fascinating exploration of the manner in which 'madness' may be best conceptualized via three trajectories in the tradition of continental philosophy, suggesting that 'pre-reflective experience as a limit-concept for normal, healthy behaviour is itself unstable'.

Moving away from the sphere of clinical psychiatry and its own transgressions, we present work that explores 'madness' and transgression in a range of cultural, artistic, literary and new media productions. April Miller gives a feminist reading of 'madness' and murder in Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal*, suggesting that this text offers 'madness and murder as strategies... for subversion and as tools for exposing women's political, medical, and legal marginalization', and this in an era 'marked both by women's tremendous professional and political gains and a seeming epidemical increase in female nervous disorders, psychiatric ailments, and criminal pathologies'. Taylor Donnelly explores the narrative and literary strategy of the use of the mad minor character as textual prophet to reveal the 'divine' interpretive truths, with a focus of Richard Yates's 1961 novel *Revolutionary Road* and its 2008 film adaptation. Simon Cross moves us into the territory of public broadcasting and its representations of 'madness', specifically the (lack of) service user voices from those experiencing psychosis and hearing voices. Sherryl Wilson focuses on the 1960's TV drama *In Two Minds* 'as a case study through which to explore the ways in which representations of mental illness operate as allegories of specific social and cultural conditions'. James Riley addresses and reconfigures the iconic figure of the iconic 'madman' Charles Manson, simultaneously contesting notions of transgression. Closing this fascinating journey through 'madness', culture and transgression, Lisa Carey provides a beautiful and haunting fictional piece, *Imprint*. The debates will continue to rage over and through 'madness' and hopefully this edition opens up more questions, pushing these debates on.

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